

Message Text

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THE FOLLOWING REPEATS PORT LOUIS 1016 ACTION
SECSTATE INFO LONDON MOSCOW CINCUSNAVEUR
CONIDEASTFOR 06 DECEMBER 7974. QUOTE:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT LOUIS 1016

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR MARR MP UK UR US IO

SUBJECT: BRITISH ADMIRAL QUESTIONS SOVIET PRESENCE IN
INDIAN OCEAN

1. DURING A THREE-DAY VISIT COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ROYAL
NAVY ADMIRAL SIR TERRENCE LEWIN FRANKLY QUESTIONED THE SIZE
OF THE SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN FLEET. IN A WIDELY REPORTED INTER-
VIEW WITH THE PRESS THAT SPARKED EDITORIAL COMMENT, SIR TERRENCE
AFFIRMED THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DESIRES THAT THE INDIAN
OCEAN REMAIN A ZONE OF PEACE AND HAS AIDED IN MAINTAINING THE
PEACE IN THIS REGION FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS. THE BRITISH
GOVERNMENT, HE CONTINUED, HAS IMPORTANT INTERESTS IN THE
IMPORTS THAT CROSS THE OCEAN. HE NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT
MORE THAN 200 OIL TANKERS CROSSED THE INDIAN OCEAN TO EUROPE
LAST YEAR. THE SOVIET UNION HAS RELATIVELY SMALL INTERESTS
IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THEIR COMMERCE, HE SAID, IS QTE NEGLI-
GIBLE UNQTE. THE ADMIRAL COMMENTED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT
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FOR HIM TO COMPREHEND WHY THE SOVIET NAVY HAS 30 SHIPS OF WAR IN THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE COMBINED US/UK TOTAL OF TEN SHIPS. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON BRITISH BASES, ADMIRAL LEWIN REPLIED THAT STRICTLY SPEAKING THE BRITISH NAVY HAS NO BASES AS SUCH IN THE INDIAN OCEAN BUT USES PORT FACILITIES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES.

2. PRESS HAVE WIDELY SPECULATED THAT ADMIRAL LEWIN'S VISIT WAS TIMED TO DISCUSS HMS MAURITIUS PHASE-OUT AND DIEGO GARCIA WITH GOM. HIS OUT-SPOKEN COMMENTS ON THE SOVIET PRESENCE WERE TAKEN BY THE PRESS AS A WARNING AGAINST TOO DEEP AN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SOVIET NAVY.

3. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER SAID THAT TIMING OF VISIT WAS COINCIDENTAL.

HEATLEY

UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

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